INTELLIGENCE NOTE

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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NEW MODIFICATION TO OLD BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE

Recent overhead photography of the Severodvinsk shipyard near Archangel has uncovered a third variant of the G class conventionally-powered Soviet ballistic missile submarine. (See Annex for description of various submarine conversion programs.) The significance of this latest configuration, which involves the installation of a six-tube missile section in an elongated sail, is that the submarine can probably accommodate the new 3,000-nautical-mile range naval missile designated the SS-NX-8. This missile is expected to be operational in about a year, and as yet the Soviets do not appear to have a suitable platform for deploying it in meaningful numbers.

Limited Interim Deployment Force?

The Soviets may want to evaluate the potential of their older ballistic missile submarines as platforms for a limited interim SS-NX-8 force. Although such submarines are relatively old, conversion to carry the long-range SS-NX-8 could significantly extend their useful operational lives and enhance their survivability at sea. An H class submarine had previously been modified to a six-tube configuration, and the appearance of such conversions of older G and H units suggests the possibility

that several additional boats in one or both classes may undergo a similar conversion. However, the Soviets could deploy a total of only some 180 launchers if the remaining G and H class units were converted to a six-tube configuration. A deployment of only 180 of the new missiles would probably not be considered a sufficient force by the Soviets.

Few Additional Conversions in the Offing

A review of the G and H class order of battle is essential to gain an understanding of the current status of the various conversion programs:

Type	Number of missile launchers	Missile Range (nm)	Number Operational	Conversion/ Outfitting	Total
G-I	3	350	7	2/0	9
G-II	3	700	9	0/2	11
G-III	4-7	1,300	0	0/1	1
G-IV	6	3,000	0	0/1	1
				subtotal	22
H-II	3	700	8	0	8
H-III	6	3,000	1	0	1
				subtotal	9
				Grand total	31

It seems unlikely that the Soviets would convert G-II and H-II class units to carry the SS-NX-8 since these submarines already have undergone conversion during the past several years to enable them to conduct submerged launches of a 700-nautical-mile range missile. We estimate that two G-I units are now being modified to G-II's, and it appears that the Soviets began to convert the most recently launched G-II unit to

such a configuration about six months after work had begun on the third G class variant. All of this would tend to indicate that additional conversions to the latest configuration will be limited in number. Moreover, there are only five unconverted G class boats operational in the Northern Fleet, and these submarines are the most likely candidates for either a G-III or G-IV type conversion. The two operational G-I's in the Pacific Fleet will probably be converted to G-II's at Soviet Far East shipyards as has been the practice in the past.

Intelligence Dilemma Remains

Deployment of the SS-NX-8 missile on the Y class would seem to be precluded without a major conversion of the submarine. Modification of the missile itself may be a preferable solution to the sizing problem. There is no direct evidence that the Soviets are developing a new class ballistic missile submarine, although construction of a more advanced boat appears to be a reasonable approach for deploying the missile. Thus, the intelligence dilemma remains as to how the Soviets intend to deploy substantial numbers of the SS-NX-8 missile at sea when it achieves an operational capability.

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ANNEX

G AND H CLASS CONVERSION PROGRAMS

G-I	The original G's were built from 1958 to 1962 and designed to launch three 350 nm range missiles while on the surface.
G-II	The first conversion program was begun in the mid-1960's to provide the submarine with an underwater launch capability for the 700 nm range missile.
G-III	The second type conversion was originally estimated to have been for the SS-NX-8, but later analysis led to the conclusion that only a missile the size of the SS-N-6 -- the 1300 nm range Y class missile -- could be accommodated in the four-tube raised superstructure behind the sail. However, the possibility still can not be excluded that three SS-NX-8's could be fitted in the sail area.
G-IV	The third type conversion involves the installation of a six-tube missile section, probably for the SS-NX-8.
H-I	The original H's were built from 1958 to 1962 and designed to launch three 350 nm range missiles while on the surface.
H-II	The first conversion program was begun in 1963 to provide the submarine with an underwater launch capability for three 700 nm range missiles.
H-III	The second type conversion involved the installation of a six-tube missile section and was completed last summer on a single unit, probably for testing the SS-NX-8 at sea.

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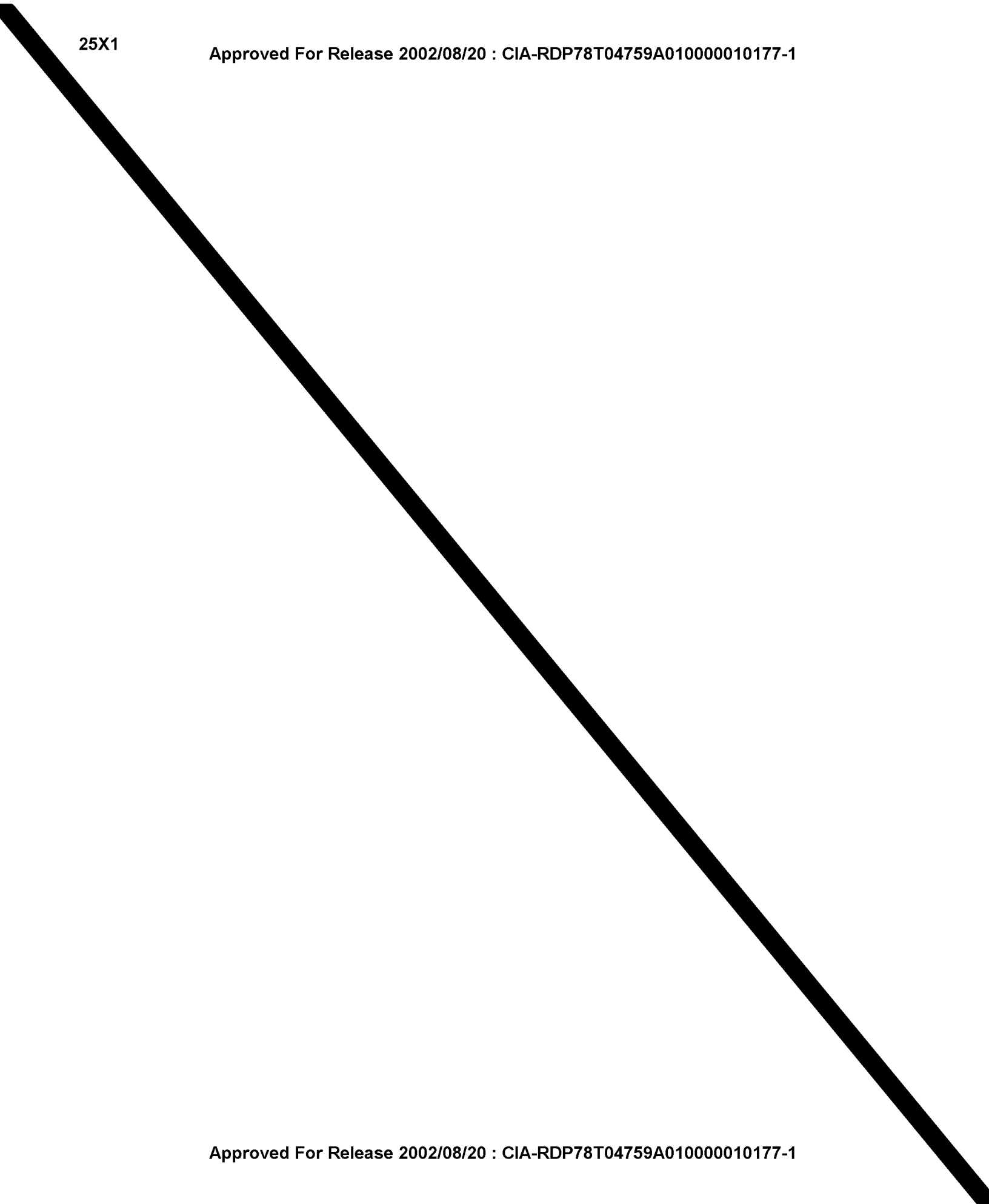

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